

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 14.618

with respect to cost, age of the property and salvage value.

(4) *Damage to real property.* In support of claims for damage to land, trees, buildings, fences, or other improvements to real property, the claimant will submit an itemized receipt if repairs have been made, or, if repairs have not been made, itemized estimates of the cost of repairs by two reliable persons who specialize in such work. If the property is not economically repairable, the claimant will submit corroborative statements of two reliable, qualified persons with respect to the value of the improvements both before and after the accident or incident and the cost of replacements.

(5) *Damage to crops.* In support of claims for damage to crops, the claimant will submit an itemized signed statement showing the number of acres, or other unit measure of crop damaged, the probable yield per unit, the gross amount which would have been realized from such probable yield and an estimate of the costs of cultivating, harvesting and marketing the crop. If the crop is one which need not be planted each year, the diminution in value of the land beyond the damage to the current year's crop will also be stated.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900-0437)

[38 FR 5474, Mar. 1, 1973, as amended at 42 FR 41418, Aug. 17, 1977; 49 FR 32848, Aug. 17, 1984]

§ 14.617 Disposition of claims.

(a) *Disposition of claims arising in Philippines.* All claims arising under 38 U.S.C. 515(b) in the Philippines, including a complete investigation report and a brief résumé of applicable law, will be forwarded directly by the Director to the General Counsel, together with a recommendation as to disposition.

(b) *Disposition of claims arising in foreign countries other than the Philippines.* When a claim is received in an American Embassy or Consulate, the Embassy or Consulate receiving such claim shall make such investigation as may be necessary or appropriate for a determination of the validity of the claim and thereafter shall forward the claim, together with all pertinent material, including a résumé of applicable law and a recommendation regarding

allowance or disallowance of the claim, through regular channels of the Department of State to the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office, Washington, DC.

(c) *Payment of claims.* Upon determining that there is liability on the part of the United States under 38 U.S.C. 515(b), the General Counsel, or such other personnel as may be designated by the Secretary, will take the necessary action to effect payment.

[38 FR 5474, Mar. 1, 1973, as amended at 42 FR 41418, Aug. 17, 1977]

CLAIMS FOR DAMAGE TO OR LOSS OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

§ 14.618 Collection action.

(a) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that damage to or loss of Government property under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs resulted from the negligence or other legal wrong of a person other than an employee of the United States, while acting within the scope of his or her employment, the Regional Counsel will request payment in full of the amount of damage from the person liable therefor or such person's insurer.

(b) The Regional Counsel may collect, compromise, suspend, or terminate collection action on any such claim as is authorized under § 2.6(e)(4)(ii) of this chapter, in conformity with the standards in § 1.900 series of this chapter. Any such claim that has not been collected in full and which has not been compromised, suspended or terminated and does not exceed \$100,000, will be referred by the Regional Counsel to the appropriate U.S. attorney along with the information required by §§ 1.951 through 1.953 of this chapter. Any claim in excess of \$100,000 for which payment in full has not been made, will be transmitted along with the report required by § 14.601(a)(2)(i), a report on credit data (§ 1.952 of this chapter), and any other pertinent information, to the General Counsel for appropriate action.

(c) The General Counsel or those designated in § 2.6(e)(4) of this chapter will take action to collect in full on such claims and to compromise, suspend, or terminate any such claims not exceeding \$100,000 in conformity with § 1.900

series of this chapter. Any such claims not compromised, or on which collection actions is not suspended or terminated and does not exceed \$100,000, will be referred to the appropriate U.S. Attorney. Any such claims in excess of \$100,000, which have not been collected in full, will be referred by the General Counsel to the Department of Justice for appropriate action.

(d) The provisions of paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section are not applicable to the collection of claims involving damage to General Services Administration Motor Pool System vehicles issued for Department of Veterans Affairs use. Whenever there is any indication that a party other than the operator of a motor pool system vehicle is at fault in an accident, all documents and data pertaining to the accident and its investigation will be submitted to the General Services Administration Regional Counsel of the region that issued the vehicle who has jurisdiction over such matters. Whenever a motor pool system vehicle is involved in an accident, resulting in damage to the property of, or injury to the person of a third party, and the third party asserts a claim against the Department of Veterans Affairs based upon the alleged negligence of the vehicle operator, the claim will be considered under § 14.600 *et seq.*

[38 FR 5474, Mar. 1, 1973, as amended at 42 FR 41418, Aug. 17, 1977; 61 FR 27784, June 3, 1996]

CLAIMS FOR COST OF MEDICAL CARE AND SERVICES

§ 14.619 Collection action.

(a) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that medical care and services were furnished as a result of the negligence of a third party, other than an employee of the United States while acting in the scope of his or her employment, the Regional Counsel will request payment in full of the amount of damage from the person liable therefor or such person's insurer.

(b) The Regional Counsel may collect, compromise, suspend, or terminate collection activity on any such claim as is authorized under § 2.6(e)(3) of this chapter. However, claims in excess of \$100,000 may be compromised, settled, or waived only with the prior

approval of the Department of Justice, which will be obtained through the General Counsel. Any such claim that has not been collected in full and which has not been compromised, suspended or terminated will be referred by the Regional Counsel to the appropriate U.S. Attorney along with appropriate information necessary to protect the interest of the Government. A copy of the referral to the U.S. Attorney will be sent to the General Counsel's office.

(c) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that a claim is appropriate under the provisions of § 17.48(g) of this chapter or 38 U.S.C. 1729, for the cost of medical, hospital, or surgical care, the Regional Counsel may assert the claim and collect payment in full. The Regional Counsel may compromise, settle, waive, suspend or terminate collection activity on any claim not exceeding \$100,000. Claims in excess of \$100,000 may only be compromised, settled, or waived with the approval of the General Counsel. Any such claim not compromised, settled, or waived or where collection action is not suspended or terminated will be referred to the appropriate United States Attorney with sufficient data to enable that office to protect the interest of the Government. A copy of all materials referred to the United States Attorney will be furnished the General Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1729(c)(1))

[42 FR 41418, Aug. 17, 1977, as amended at 43 FR 10560, Mar. 14, 1978; 51 FR 23227, June 26, 1986; 58 FR 39153, July 22, 1993; 61 FR 27785, June 3, 1996]

REPRESENTATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMANTS; RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONS, ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES, ATTORNEYS, AGENTS; RULES OF PRACTICE AND INFORMATION CONCERNING FEES, 38 U.S.C. 5901–5905

§ 14.626 Purpose.

The purpose of the regulation of representatives, agents, attorneys, and other individuals is to ensure that claimants for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits have responsible,